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ABSTRACT

Results of a survey of residential students at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington, are presented, along with recommendations based on the findings. The Student Housing Evaluation was designed to assess student attitudes about the university's housing policy, facilities, and staff. The 610 respondents (46% response rate) consisted of a disproportionate number of white students and freshmen. While 81% planned to return to school in the fall, 35% of these students planned to change campus residence. Findings include: 91% believed housing helped them develop friendships, 59% preferred to study in their rooms, 43% felt noise was not a problem, 73% said they were active in making their living area a good place to live and 77% had attended residence programs. Recommendations include: proportionately distributing freshmen across all living areas; providing living/learning environments that promote student development; integrating evaluation results into the training of residence staff; and enforcing living area quiet hours. The questionnaire is included. (SW)

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STUDENT HOUSING EVALUATION:
Executive Summary

Spring 1985

David F. Allen
Special Assistant to the
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RB-DOS-09-20-85

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is the product of a small army of people without which it never would have been possible. Besides the 610 residents who completed the survey, my thanks go especially to Ms. Pat Leonard, Associate Dean of Students and Chairperson of the Residence Life Task Force, whose leadership kept the study on track in spite of its many assorted obstacles. Also to be commended are the subcommittee members who provided the critical content of the questionnaire and aided in its timely distribution to nearly 1,400 campus residents. Subcommittee members are: Mr. Jeff Steinmiller, Student Activities Adviser; Ms. Margaret Taylor, Coordinator of Auxillary Services; and Miss Gail Young, Coordinator for Residence Life. Also thanked are the numerous resident advisers who distributed the surveys in the living areas. Not to be forgotten are the six people who spent literally hours processing data into the VAX computer using DATATRIEVE. These persons are: Mrs. Carol Barkley, Secretary, University Union; Mr. Mark Boggis, student; Mrs. Mimi Brideaux, Secretary, University Union; Miss Kim McIntosh, student; Miss Theresa Murphy, student; Miss Luann Smith, student. Last, but not least, are the staff persons within the Office of Institutional Research and the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Office. Mr. Bob Fry, Director of Office of Institutional Research, was instrumental in responding to many of the data processing issues. Mrs. S. Gail Craddock, provided critical data on the residential population as a whole so that comparisons with respondents could be made. Mrs. Nancy H. Hill, Office of Institutional Research Secretary added her professional touch to the many tables and charts included. Finally, the person who kept the report together to include its entire word processing and campus distribution--Miss Tracie Edge, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Word Processor, is to be commended. The quality of her responsiveness under often rigid time lines is impeccable.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In order to provide better services to residential students, the Office of the Dean of Students created a task force and charged it with evaluating and offering recommendations to improve residence life at UNCW. The assessment tool chosen by this task force was a survey instrument distributed to residential students in the spring of 1985. This study is a summary of that assessment. A complete report is available in the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Office under RB-DOS-06-19-85. This summary includes the results, summary and recommendations emanating from a survey entitled "Student Housing Evaluation" (see appendix). Its purpose was to assess what students think about UNCW housing policy, facilities, and staff.

RESULTS

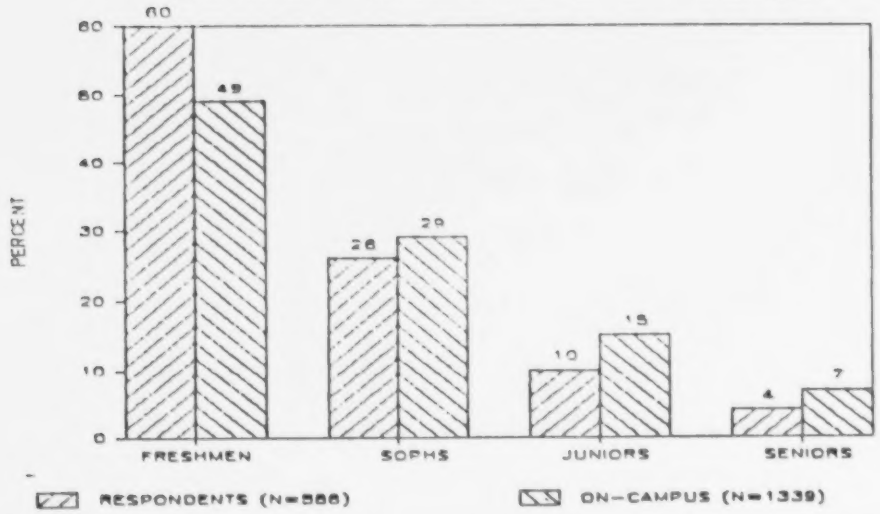
Resulting in a response rate of 46%, 610 residential students responded to a questionnaire concerning reactions to residence life at UNCW. A disproportionate number of white students and freshmen responded.

Characteristics of the Respondents

The typical respondent to the evaluation was an 18 or 19 year-old (71%), white (92.3%), freshman (60.5%). Table 1 compares survey respondents to all campus residents by class and shows how freshmen were the only ones over represented. Respondents were evenly divided between males (50.3%) and females (49.7%). Approximately 65% of the entire population of respondents reported that they had lived on campus for two semesters (including spring 1985); 25% had lived on campus three or more semesters.

TABLE 1

SURVEY RESPONSES BY CLASS

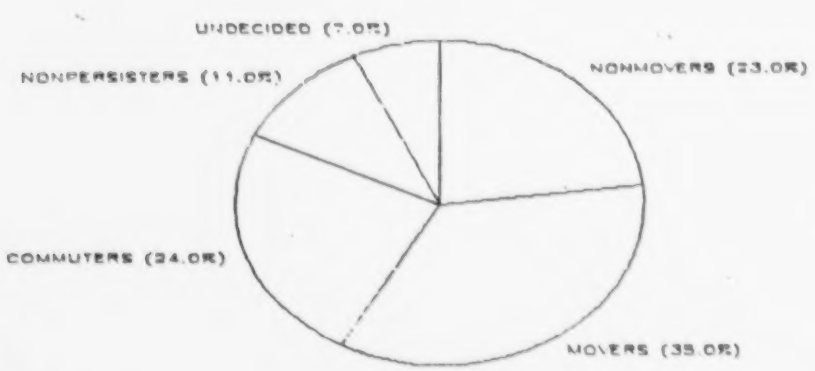


Of the 81.4% who claimed they would return in the fall, 35% planned to live in a different on-campus residence, and 22.8% do not plan to move. Almost one-fourth (23.6%) claimed they would live off-campus. Of the 10.8% not planning on returning in the fall, nearly a majority (48.4%) of those giving a reason said they were transferring. Other reasons stated included graduating (12.5%), the lottery system (7.8%), and "other" (4.7%). Two of the three in the "other" category specified jobs as the reason for not returning. Less than 10% (7.8%) were undecided about their fall plans. Plans for the fall are illustrated at Table 2.

TABLE 2

HOUSING PLANS

FALL 1985



Residential Environment

Housing Facilities and Policy

Students indicated their level of agreement with several housing facility and policy statements related to their residential environment. Responses ranged from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5). Most strongly agreed or agreed that they:

1. have neighbors that support one another (68.2%),
2. care about each other (55.8%),
3. keep the living area damage free (51.9%),
4. respect individual rights and/or property (57.8%),
5. prefer to study in their room (58.7%),
6. are satisfied with living area noise (42.7%),
7. assume some responsibility in curbing living area noise (51.4%),
8. feel safe (84.7%),
9. feel their hall is a clean place to live (54.6%),
10. are satisfied with the responsiveness of custodial staff (56.2%),
11. have good living conditions (68.6%),
12. have ample privacy (51.2%),
13. have adequate study space (58.2%),
14. consider noise level as a factor in future housing plans (48.8%),
15. find on-campus living beneficial to their educational experience (71.3%),
16. would recommend on-campus housing to others (69.6%),
17. find on-campus helps develop significant friendships (90.8%),
18. benefit by having basic living needs provided (71.8%),
19. find their living area conducive to socializing (78.3%),
20. think campus residence should determine visitation policy (74.7%),
21. find the lottery system of room selection fair (52%),
22. think preferential housing should be given to freshmen (60.6%) and upperclassmen (66.6%),
23. think it is beneficial to house freshmen together (63.9%),
24. feel students should have the option of returning to their present room the following semester (88.2%),
25. are satisfied with the apartment assignments separating males and females within buildings (48.1%),
26. prefer random selection of apartments (53.9%),
27. would opt for special interest living areas (46%),
28. believe living on campus helped them understand people unlike themselves (92.2%),
29. agree that they have been active in making their living area a good place to live (72.7%),
30. have attended programs sponsored by their residence hall staff (77.2%),
31. feel they should be held responsible for helping to support residence hall policies (77.9%),
32. think bicycles are unsafe outside (50.6%), and
33. believe there is adequate recreational space (38.1%) in the residence life area.

Students tended to be neutral or were evenly divided in their level of agreement with several other statements. Most were neutral concerning whether:

1. they would like their living area to set or increase its number of quiet hours (37.4%),
2. an all night receptionist would increase their sense of security (40.5%),
3. their living area was conducive to studying (36.9%),
4. there was adequate programming space (47.2%), and
5. each living area should be liable for area damages (37.8%).

Regarding who should receive preferential housing, students were neutral toward transfers (40.7%) and students without disciplinary infractions (33.9%). Responses were evenly divided among students who had rated their preference for living off-campus if comparable housing were available.

Students disagreed or strongly disagreed that:

1. they were satisfied with the living area alcohol policy (48%),
2. all visitors should be escorted (74.8%),
3. preferential housing should be given to either high GPA students (42.6%),
4. participants in residence life (44.5%) or university activities (43.9%), and
5. none should receive preferential housing (49.7%).

Residential Staff

In another section of the survey (questions 8-20) students were asked to give yes or no responses to questions related to their experiences with the living area staff. In terms of affirmative responses:

1. students claimed their R.A. is interested in their opinion on programs and activities (82.4%),
2. think they understand the role of the R.A. (87.5%),
3. have gone to their R.A. for help (83.8%),
4. have an R.A. that provides them with reliable information (87.3%),
5. are able to contact their R.A. (80.8%),
6. have an R.A. who informs them of their rights and responsibilities as a resident (87.6%),
7. feel listened to by their R.A. (90.8%),
8. claim their R.A. has made an effort to get to know them (76.8%),
9. feel their R.A. is tolerant (89.6%),
10. think their R.A. follows through on commitments (89.1%),
11. feel that their R.A. is meeting job requirements (89.2%), and
12. feel comfortable in going to their R.A. for personal help (48%).

Negative responses were associated with students' inability to contact either their R.D. (25.5%) or Area Coordinator (55.4%).

Student Preferences

Students indicated their interest in any or all of a dozen special interest living areas. The top four ranked below in order of those receiving the most response:

RANK	SPECIAL INTEREST LIVING AREA	RESPONSES N	RESPONSES %
1	Co-ed Floor	409	67.0
2	Liberal Visitation	377	61.8
3	Non-smoking Floor	209	34.3
4	Quiet Floor	176	28.9

Finally, preferences for four other items were ranked as follows:

RANK	ITEM	RESPONSES N	RESPONSES Rank %
1	Selection of Roommates	573	73.5
2	Selection of Residence Hall or Apartment	573	55.7
3	Specific Room/Apartment Location	574	57.8
4	Selection of R.A.	572	80.2

SUMMARY

This study gave nearly 1,400 students the opportunity to voice their opinions about campus living. Close to half (46%) chose to answer over 90 questions on a survey related to housing facilities, policy and staff. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of all respondents have lived on campus for two smesters; a fourth have been on campus three or more semesters. Freshmen and whites were overrepresented in the study. Nearly everyone (81%) said they planned to return in the fall; however, the largest segment of those returning (35%) plan to change campus residence.

On the surface, students are by and large very satisfied with campus living. Some of the more salient, positive findings were that they think living on campus has helped them educationally as well as socially. The survey showed that 91% believed housing helped them develop significant friendships. About as many (92%) claimed housing taught them to understand people different from themselves. Most (83%) said they were active in making their living area a good place to live and had attended residence programs (77%). Many students (60%) prefer to study in their rooms. However, 43% would say that noise was not a problem in their area. About half (51%) would assume some responsibility in alleviating noise problems. However, 78% said they should be held responsible for supporting living area policy. Moreover, students said they felt safe (85%), thought their needs were being met (72%), and would recommend housing as a good place to live (70%).

Other responses related to policy were more controversial. While barely half (52%) agree that the lottery system is fair, nearly all (88%) felt students should have the option of returning to their present room the following semester. Students would not give preferential housing either to high GPA students or those in residence life activities. However, most (50%) agree that some preferential housing should be given. In terms of housing guest policy, nearly three out of four agreed that residents should determine visitation policy. Regarding our campus alcohol policy, the largest percentage (48%) came from those disagreeing with it.

Staffing evaluations were categorically positive. The only negative response concerned locating either their residence director or area coordinator.

Almost half would prefer a special interest living area. Of a dozen areas, students ranked co-ed floors as their first choice, followed by liberal visitation, a no smoking floor and a quiet floor. Also, given a choice among selecting roommates, living areas, room location, or R.A.--selection of roommates ranked first.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings of this study point to a generally satisfied sample of students. Inferential analyses reflect a housing population that is more concerned with living policy than facility or staffing issues. Most of the recommendations focus on policy related concerns. The reader is cautioned that freshmen are over represented in this study. While freshmen, as a whole, represent half of those living on campus, they make up 60% of all survey respondents. A comparison of freshmen and non-freshmen pointed out that although these two groups have distinctively different reasons for recommending student housing--they are more similar to eachother when nonrecommenders are examined. Noise is a common factor associated with the residential plans of both groups. It may be that stricter adherence and enforcement of quiet hours would increase housing satisfaction. However, without controlling for the effects of the lottery, it will be impossible to tell whether decreased noise levels are linked to decisions to keep the same address.

In conclusion, the following guidelines for action are offered:

o Proportionately Distribute Freshmen Across All Living Areas

Current students have a 40% chance of being selected through the lottery system. New freshmen are reserved 840 housing spaces. It is not clear from this study whether a student was chosen by the lottery or what impact it had on his/her reaction to the survey. Non-recommenders of

student housing may be those not chosen. This relationship is suspected because of the fact that the two areas most closely associated with their plans to move were "room option" and "lottery fairness." If it is to remain a fact of life for students that they have a less than even chance of acquiring continued campus housing, then it might make sense to distribute the incoming new freshmen more evenly across residential area. This would increase their contact with upperclassmen and encourage them to persist through graduation at UNCW. For example, the freshmen represented more than half of all students on campus in the spring of this year; however, in Galloway, 90% were freshmen compared to only 18% in the apartments. Belk and Hewlett were the only two areas close to the population distribution of campus freshmen with 50 and 47 percent respectively.

o Experiment with Special Interest Living Areas

In addition to those desired by students, consideration should be given to living/learning environments that are designed to promote optimum student development.

o Experiment with Living Areas

Compare an area that gives students maximum control of their surroundings with other areas that lack such control. Measure differences using grades, the College and University Environment Scale (CUES), the Personality Research Form E (PRF), and the College Student Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSSQ).

o Disseminate Evaluative Research Efforts

Integrate evaluation results such as this into the training of residence staff, VOICE (Volunteers Organized to Increase Campus Enthusiasm) members, and other student leaders.

o Institute and Enforce Living Area Quiet Hours

Noise was a common problem for almost all nonrecommenders of student housing. It was significantly related to the future plans of three living areas (Belk, Galloway, and Hewlett). Since noise accounted for 22% of plans to change address--each living area should be able to set its own quiet hours.

o Centralize Programs

Plan programs that are in close proximity to areas central to the daily lives of students.

o Personalize Neutral Areas

Decrease vandalism by allowing students to personalize neutral areas within living spaces.

Finally, if we are to identify some of the basic needs students attempt to satisfy through their living environments, we must understand the effects of architectual arrangements on student behavior; systematize assignment procedures; and implement policies and procedures. These should increase students' satisfaction, effectiveness, and academic achievement while also reducing attrition, damages, and inappropriate student behavior.

APPENDIX

STUDENT HOUSING EVALUATION

This evaluation provides you with the opportunity to respond to selected aspects of the residence hall or apartment living environment. Your input will be taken very seriously and will affect upcoming innovations in residence life programming. Your responses will be held in strictest CONFIDENCE. Do not write your name anywhere on this form. Please take a few moments to complete the survey now. Thank you for giving us an opportunity to serve you and others better.

NOTE: Throughout the survey the term area refers to: Residence hall (eg: room, floor, building) or apartment (eg: room, apartment, apartment complex).

1. Please answer these questions about your sex, race, age and class level so we can tell how difference groups of students feel about our resident life program. (Circle one for each category)

CLASS LEVEL	SEX	AGE
1. Freshman	1. Male	1. Less than 18
2. Sophomore	2. Female	2. 18 years
3. Junior		3. 19 years
4. Senior	RACE	4. 20 years
5. Graduate or professional student	1. White	5. 21 years
	2. Black	6. 22 - 23 years
6. Special student	3. Asian	7. 24 - 25 years
7. Other/Unclassified	4. Hispanic	8. Over 25 years

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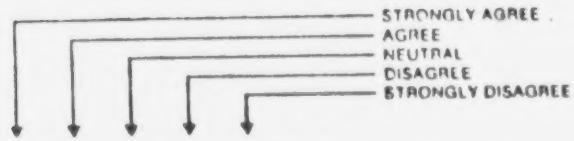
2. How many semesters have you lived in your current living area? How long have you lived on campus?

LIVING AREA	TOTAL SEMESTERS AT CURRENT LIVING AREA (Include this semester)							TOTAL SEMESTERS LIVING ON-CAMPUS (Include this semester)						
A. Apartment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B. Belk	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C. Galloway	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D. Hewlett	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
E. Graham	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. Where do you plan to live next semester? (Circle one response)

1. Off campus
2. Same residence
3. Different on-campus residence
4. Not returning because:
   - a. Graduating
   - b. Transferring
   - c. Lottery system
   - d. Academic difficulty
   - e. Financial difficulty
   - f. Other (please specify) _____
5. Undecided

4. Indicate your level of agreement with each statement about housing facilities:



A.	1 2 3 4 5	Most residents in my living area help and support one another
B.	1 2 3 4 5	Most residents in my living area care about me
C.	1 2 3 4 5	Most residents try to keep the living area free of damage
D.	1 2 3 4 5	Most residents in my living area respect the rights and/or property of one another
E.	1 2 3 4 5	I prefer to study in my room
F.	1 2 3 4 5	The level of noise in my living area is satisfactory
G.	1 2 3 4 5	I should assume some responsibility in alleviating noise problems
H.	1 2 3 4 5	I feel safe living in my living area
I.	1 2 3 4 5	I feel my hall is a clean place to live
J.	1 2 3 4 5	The custodial staff respond to my maintenance concerns in a reasonable amount of time
K.	1 2 3 4 5	My living area is in good condition
L.	1 2 3 4 5	My living area allows me enough privacy
M.	1 2 3 4 5	There is adequate space in my living area to study
N.	1 2 3 4 5	The noise level in my present living area is a factor in determining my future housing plans
O.	1 2 3 4 5	I would like my living area to set or increase its number of quiet hours
P.	1 2 3 4 5	Living on-campus has been beneficial to my educational experience
Q.	1 2 3 4 5	I would recommend on-campus housing to someone else as a good place to live
R.	1 2 3 4 5	An all night receptionist in the hall office would increase my sense of security
S.	1 2 3 4 5	Living on-campus has helped me develop significant friendships
T.	1 2 3 4 5	I benefit by having my basic living necessities provided in an on-campus living situation
U.	1 2 3 4 5	I feel comfortable in going to my RA for personal concerns
V.	1 2 3 4 5	My living area is conductive to studying
W.	1 2 3 4 5	My living area is conducive to socializing
X.	1 2 3 4 5	There is adequate programming space in the residence life area
Y.	1 2 3 4 5	There is adequate recreational space in the residence life area
Z.	1 2 3 4 5	I am satisfied with the current UNCW alcohol policy in the residence life area
AA.	1 2 3 4 5	Each living area should be liable for common area damages (ie: lounges, hallways, etc.)
BB.	1 2 3 4 5	Residence halls or apartments should be allowed to determine visitation policy
CC.	1 2 3 4 5	All visitors in the residence area should be escorted

Please answer Yes or No to the following:

YES NO

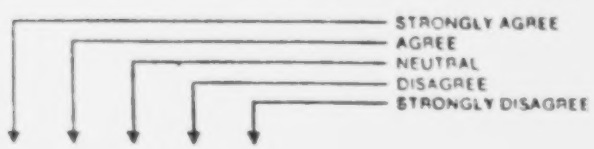
Y N 5. By living on-campus are you learning to understand people who are different (racial, cultural, lifestyle, etc.) from you?
Y N 6. Have you attended programs and activities sponsored by your residence hall staff?
Y N 7. Have you been active in making your living area a good place to live?

Y N 8. Does your RA seek and consider your opinion on programs and activities?
Y N 9. Do you understand the role of the Resident Assistant?
Y N 10. Have you ever gone to your RA for information and/or assistance?
Y N 11. Has your RA been able to provide you with needed information or direct you to someone who could?

Y N 12. Are you usually able to contact your RA when you need that person?
Y N 13. Has your RA made you aware of your rights and responsibilities as a resident?
Y N 14. Do you feel listened to when you talk to your RA?
Y N 15. Has your RA made an effort to get to know you beyond your name?
Y N 16. Do you feel that your RA is open to opinions that differ from his/hers?

Y N 17. Does your RA follow through on commitments that he/she made?
Y N 18. Do you feel your RA is fulfilling his/her job requirements?
Y N 19. Would you know how to contact your Resident Director if needed?
Y N 20. Would you know how to contact an Area Coordinator if needed?
Y N 21. Do you feel that you should be held responsible for helping to support the policies of your residence hall?
Y N 22. Bicycles are safe outside.

Indicate your level of agreement with each statement about housing:



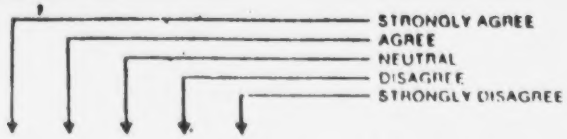
1 2 3 4 5 a. The lottery system is a fair way to decide student room selection. If you disagree, please state why:

_____

The following groups should receive preferential housing:

1 2 3 4 5 b. Freshmen
1 2 3 4 5 c. Upperclassmen
1 2 3 4 5 d. Transfers
1 2 3 4 5 e. High GPA students
1 2 3 4 5 f. Participants in residence life activities

1 2 3 4 5 g. Participants in University activities
1 2 3 4 5 h. Students without disciplinary infractions
1 2 3 4 5 i. None should receive preferential housing
1 2 3 4 5 j. I would prefer living off campus if comparable housing were available



1 2 3 4 5 k. It is beneficial for freshmen to be housed together
1 2 3 4 5 l. Students should have the option of returning to their present room the following semester
1 2 3 4 5 m. Apartment assignments separating males and females within buildings is satisfactory

If you disagree with M above, would you prefer:
1 2 3 4 5 n. Single sex buildings
1 2 3 4 5 o. Random selection of apartments
1 2 3 4 5 p. Special interest living areas should be provided (eg: quiet areas, non-smoking areas)

Please indicate all special interest living areas you would be interested in:

( ) q. Quiet floor
( ) r. Academic majors floor (ie: business, English, etc.)
( ) s. Non-smoking floor

( ) t. Non-drinking floor
( ) u. Sorority or fraternity floor
( ) v. Wellness floor
( ) w. International floor
( ) x. No visitation

( ) y. Limited visitation
( ) z. Liberal visitation
( ) aa. Similar hobbies floor (ie: stamp collecting, surfing, etc.)
( ) bb. Co-ed floor

Please rank order by personal preference for the following: (1=most important, etc.) (Rank 1-4)

( ) a. Selection of roommates
( ) b. Selection of residence hall or apartment
( ) c. Specific room/apartment location
( ) d. Selection of Resident Assistants

COMMENTS: (Please feel free to include suggestions concerning maintenance, furnishings, decorating, recreational and social space, etc.)

Please return your survey to your Resident Assistant

Thank you for your help
Good luck with the remainder of the semester